

KEYNOTES

A newletter of ideas for the Employee Services and Recreation Professional

"There ain't no surer way to find out whether you like people or hate them than to travel with them."

Mark Twain

Using Time Effectively

By Patricia Fripp

In a recent nationwide survey, 72 percent of managers said they did not have time to think or plan. Yet surely, our value to our organization and to ourselves is because we can think. Time could well be our most valuable commodity, yet many managers I've observed don't seem in control of their time.

Many managers are efficient. Few are effective. Peter Drucker said, "Being efficient is doing things well; being effective is doing the right things."

Many managers know they should shift their use of time and attend to high-priority problems, yet they seem to be compelled to keep busy with less consequential matters that should be delegated. Why? One observation is that managers want to avoid or escape from job-related anxiety.

Many managerial jobs are a blend of familiar routines and innovative activities. In general, people experience more anxiety when they start new activities than when they are engaged in those parts of their jobs that they have already mastered. We invoke Gresham's Law of Time Management to describe exactly how managers pattern their daily activities: "Other factors being equal, the desire to avoid anxiety would cause an executive to repeat familiar patterns and shun innovative activities." For example, a

division executive may read and deal with all of his or her mail but may not get around to writing the working paper on the division's strategic direction.

In a 1980 survey of more than 1,300 managers, including more than 500 presidents and vice presidents, poor prioritizing was common. The survey reports that despite most executive long hours only 47 percent of their working time is taken up with managerial duties. They fill most of the remaining time with hands-on work that the survey writers term "doing" as opposed to "managing."

What do I suggest? Managers can

Continued on page 2

Wellness Incentives

Using incentives is an important part of maximizing the level of employee participation, completing multiple session programs and maintaining behavioral adherence in wellness programs.

When considering incentives, it is important to consider the following 10 steps:

1. Clarify your behavioral change objective for the incentive program.
2. Research the values that bring

Continued on page 2

Using Time Effectively

Continued from page 1

make more careful entries in their appointment books, thus using them not only as reminders but as a time log. Executives can rate meetings as to whether they are an effective use of their time. At the end of each day, a manager can spend five to ten minutes reconstructing the day and noting the key activities, time spent, and other important qualifiable factors. Certainly, an executive cannot plan for tomorrow before finishing today.

Take time to define the priority areas of your responsibilities—

activities only you can and should perform. Require your employees to list the highest priority activities in their jobs and number them in order of importance. Sit, discuss and negotiate areas of responsibility and authority. Agree which part of your day should be "quiet time," uninterrupted unless there is a real emergency. Agree which portion of the day your employees should have for "quiet time." For any activity that is too large and overwhelming, consider Alan Lakein's "swiss cheese approach." Take a small, ten to 20-

minute bite each day out of the project and soon the chore is managed, rather than doing a ten-minute, low priority activity.

We don't really manage our time, but our activities. Good choices, planning, and delegating can make it appear as if we have "more time."

Patricia Fripp, CPAE, is a professional speaker from San Francisco, author of "Get What You Want," past-president of National Speakers Association. For information on books, tapes, or talks: 800-634-3035, in CA 800-553-6556.

Wellness Incentives

Continued from page 1

about the desired behavior in the target population.

3. Select the formal and informal pay values or types or rewards that reflect the values in the target population.
4. Develop a draft set of decision rules for the incentive program.
5. Examine the draft rules for any unintended artifacts or counterproductive side effects.

6. Use a focus group to try out the rules on, examine their responses and make any necessary adjustments.
7. Develop/refine a communications plan for an incentive program.
8. Field or pilot test the incentive if the population is very large.
9. Evaluate the pilot test, refine the incentive program accordingly, and fully implement the program.

10. Periodically evaluate the incentive program and revise accordingly.

This 10-step method will help maximize the impact of your incentives, and will minimize the risk of less than desired effectiveness.

(Source: Employee Health & Fitness, September 1992)

DID YOU KNOW?

- Seventy-six percent of people drive alone to get around town.

(Source: USA Today, July 31, 1992)

- Every aluminum can you don't recycle is the equivalent of filling that can with gasoline and dumping it on the ground. Every can you recycle saves the energy needed to run a big-screen TV for three hours.

(Source: Vitality, September 1992)

Parades For Tour Groups

North America is loaded with parades that offer a unique destination choice for tour groups. Many times group tours will be treated to special attention with extras such as a brunch, reserved seating, bus parking near the parade route, and even a special pre-parade ball where attendees mingle with costumed characters.

The Gasparilla Parade in Tampa, Florida is held every year in early February. The parade area is "seized by pirates" and features live music and entertainment on stages in the downtown area. The street festival ends with a climactic fireworks display. Hundreds of boats sail to Tampa Bay accompanying a fully rigged pirate ship.

Tour operators within the state of Florida may operate a short two day/two night trip, with the parade being the final destination. The Tampa association promotes the Gasparilla Day Parade across the country through presentations to organizations and group leaders.

In its eighth year, the Star City

Holiday Parade in Lincoln, NB, occurs the first Saturday in December. The parade attracts over 70,000 spectators and is televised. The grand event features giant balloons, Santa Claus, floats, and 25 marching bands.

At the Star City Holiday Parade, designated seating for groups is available.

There are many big name parades to arrange a group tour package to: Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade; Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, CA; Portland, Oregon's Grand Floral Parade; and Macon, Georgia's Cherry Blossom Festival Parade. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin the Great Circus Parade takes place every July. The parade showcases a pageant of colorful antique circus wagons, exotic animals, brass bands, clowns, and a 40-horse hitch.

Contact your local tour operator to inquire about any special parade packages.

(Source: *Courier*, September 1992)

- **Keep your staff fresh and focused by moving workers between different types of jobs within their areas of ability to keep creative juices flowing.**

(Source: *Business & Industry Hotline*, No. 33)

- **Line the inside of frisbees with paper plates at company outings. The frisbee acts as a plate reinforcer and can be printed with your company logo serving as a memento.**

(Source: Jan Miskowic, *Medtronic Activities Committee/Special Events Coordinator*, Minneapolis, MN)

"One man practicing sportsmanship is far better than 50 preaching it."

Knute K. Rockne

A Lesson For Life: Attitude

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one thing we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes."

This was submitted anonymously to *Keynotes*. The original author is Charles Swindoll.

If you have any items similar to this, send them to *Keynotes*.

Organizing A Working Team

For many companies, forming employee teams provides the motivation to achieve total quality management. Employee teams are managing entire divisions in some companies; in smaller businesses, they are taking on responsibility for everything from housekeeping to product development, from employee discipline to compensation.

Here are some of the major types of teams that business owners and consultants say can lead to quality improvements within a business.

Task Forces. A temporary group of players responsible for bringing about particular changes.

Quality-Assurance Teams. A team consisting of several staff members who visit the firm's clients and make sure that the programs are up to the company's standards.

Cross-Functional Teams. They

exchange expertise. Team members are trained in each other's jobs to speed production or to substitute for others during a crunch. Another type of cross-functional team brings together the knowledge of various work areas to come up with solutions to operational problems.

Product-Development Teams. A team of individuals that represent different areas of expertise, come together to develop new products.

Self-Directed Teams. A self-directed team is appointed to manage itself because the team members are those employees most familiar with a particular aspect of the company.

When setting up a team, a manager needs to look at the feasibility, priorities, and the firm's mission and objectives. Barriers to team building also need to be uncovered and eliminated. Start with small teams

and thoroughly train the teams. Remember to give feedback and development support to the team.

(Source: *Nation's Business*, July 1992)

Fit for Traveling

There are different ways you can incorporate exercise into your travel schedule:

- Make your workout part of your schedule, actually setting aside time each day for exercise.
- Whenever possible, stay at hotels with on-site exercise facilities.
- If you belong to a health club, check into reciprocal privileges at clubs in cities to which you travel.

(Source: *Vitality*, October 1992)

QUESTIONS

Q. How can I get my manager to let me go to a NESRA conference?

A. Go through the conference program and highlight those sessions, exhibits, workshops, etc. which you plan to attend to increase your knowledge of ES&R. Show this to your manager and explain to him/her what you hope to gain from the conference. This is the only national conference of its kind geared towards the employee services and recreation field. If you have attended a conference in the past, tell your manager what you have gained. If this is your first

conference, tell your manager about the conference's networking opportunities. The more efficient you become, the more cost-effective your program will be.

Employee Services Management magazine has a Staff Side article in the November issue by Cathy Todd-Moffat of The Meetinghouse Companies—show your manager the article.

Before you talk with your manager about the trip, have your expected expenses calculated, why it is important for you to attend, and what you hope to bring back to the company.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley

NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life

"The time is always right to do what is right."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Boat Rides for Father's Day

Mother's Day brunches are a much touted affair. Restaurants advertise Mother's Day brunches months in advance of May. Why make your mother cook dinner on Mother's Day—take her out to brunch instead?

In today's world, mothers are not necessarily the ones cooking dinner every night for their families. As two-career families increase, the number of fathers helping in the household chores are increasing. So on Father's Day, why not plan a special brunch for someone who might just be the main cook in the family?

In Minneapolis, MN, Ceridian planned a special Father's Day brunch on a boat sailing down the St. Croix River. The event was originally planned to increase activities at its recreational park, but since the brunch was a success, plans are underway to increase the boat size for next Father's Day.

Planning a Father's Day brunch boat ride was a relatively easy task. After a boat was rented, advertisements went in the employees' newsletter and flyers were handed out to attendees at the recreational park.

A boat that would hold 50 people was rented for this event. "We didn't know how many would respond because this was the first time we planned a Father's Day brunch. We could have actually sold out another boat of the same size, but now we'll know for next year to rent a bigger boat," said Joe Hauglie, manager, employee services network, Ceridian.

When considering the boat's capacity be sure to count everyone that will be on the boat, whether they are eating or not. The boat's count is determined by the number of lifejackets it has. If an infant is

continued on page 2

Healthy Computer Habits

When you are using your computer, take a break at least once an hour (every 30 minutes is best). Stretch your wrists and upper body, refocus on something farther away.

Maintain a neutral posture by keeping your chin back so your head is over your shoulders, sit back in your chair with a support for your lower back, (use a footrest to support your feet if you need to). Support your wrists

so they are straight (a wrist rest helps), and keep your elbows at your sides. Have your keyboard, mouse and screen set-up properly.

These habits will make working on your computer health-hazardous free.

(Source: Activities, SRI International, November 3, 1992)

Boat Rides for Father's Day

continued from page 1

coming onboard, s/he needs a lifejacket and therefore needs to be figured into the count, even though the infant is not eating.

Ceridian's Father's Day brunch boat ride lasted from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Music was provided by the boat but no other entertainment was held. "I think for next year we might plan some father and child games or some sort of additional entertainment. Last year we had the buffet brunch with the sit down eating and it went well. For the next year we would add more to the event," commented Hauglie.

Many times the boats will have local restaurants that they deal with

for catering if they do not have kitchen facilities. Work with the caterer/kitchen to serve the food you want at the brunch.

Between the cost of renting the boat and catering, Ceridian was able to keep the cost low enough per person. They took telephone reservations and asked for participants to prepay to ensure an accurate count.

Most larger cities have lakes or rivers in which you should be able to rent a boat for your own similar Father's Day brunch boat ride. If you live in a town where a boat isn't available, another option is a dinner or brunch train ride. There are many

organizations that plan murder mystery, wine tasting, etc. train rides. You can contact one of them to inquire about a Father's Day brunch.

After the event is over, remember to conduct an evaluation to find out what the attendees thought. It is a good way to learn for the future if you need more food, a lower fee, more entertainment, etc.

Now's the time to inquire whether a Father's Day brunch boat ride (or train ride) is a viable event for your organization. You'll need to start to rent the boat (or train) over the next couple of months, since June is a busy month for boat rentals.

Dealing With Anxiety Attacks

Panic disorders affect up to 2 percent of the U.S. population. These disorders are characterized by chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, trembling, and a racing heart. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, approximately 10 percent of all people will have an attack at some time.

The cause of panic disorders are ambiguous. The experts claim that there is effective treatment and panic disorder sufferers have an excellent chance of resuming a normal life. It is important to see a specialist who is familiar with panic disorder.

Currently, there is both drug therapy and behavior modification

which work to reduce the panic attacks. It is also important for sufferers to know they are not alone. Ask a specialist for a name of a local support group. There is no need to change jobs, lifestyles or career goals.

(Source: Nation's Business, August 1992)

DID YOU KNOW?

- "Nearly one-third of adults still believe they can become infected with the AIDS virus by donating blood. The risk of infection from giving blood is nil: blood banks use sterile, throwaway needles and collection equipment."

(Source: University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter, November 1992)

- Americans drive an average of almost 6,000 miles each year.

(Source: Personnel Journal, August 1992)

"Trust your hunches. They're usually based on facts filed away just below the conscious level."

Dr. Joyce Brothers

Ordering Recognition Awards

When selecting the perfect gifts or awards for your employees, clients, vendors and co-workers for a job well-done or to say thank you, the ultimate challenge is to find the right award. You want an award that makes a lasting impression and fits within your budget.

There are thousands of manufacturers that can help you give a creative edge to your rewarding. Determine these factors before calling a vendor:

- The number of gifts and awards needed for this year.
- The budget you have available.
- Which categories of gifts you'll need—personal versus business. Do you want to give gifts to be used in the office every day? Wearables for recreation? Seasonal such as

ornaments? Food or candy?

- Do you have specific ideas for any of these gifts or awards? If so, remember to tell your vendor exactly what you have in mind.
- Decide if logos and personalizations are necessary. These add costs on small quantities. And most importantly, order your awards now.

Rewards come in many sizes, shapes and prices. An award doesn't have to be expensive to say "Thanks" and that you care. It's that old cliché again saying, "It's truly the thought that counts!"

This information was submitted by Jill Starr, promotional marketing consultant, The Ad Solution, Inc., in Bethesda, MD.

• Over 20 percent of children were living in a single-parent household in 1990 compared with 11.2 percent in 1970.

(Source: USA Today, June 1, 1992)

• The term "stress" doesn't mean a negative reaction to external circumstances. It means an aroused reaction. Sometimes a little stress can pep you up, make you alert, and give you that extra burst of energy.

(Source: Executive Edge, November 1992)

The Grapevine

In any organization, information is like oxygen: People need it and they will find it. An office grapevine, which usually operates in most organizations, is especially active during times of change.

If people feel well-informed and positive about what is happening, the informal talk is a healthy way of processing feelings and making necessary transitions. If people feel in the dark and worried about what is going to happen, their private talk easily becomes negative gossip.

Here are some tips for using the grapevine:

- Listen to what people are saying, but don't make decisions or base action on speculative information.
- Use the informal network to get support for your ideas and projects, and to find out where the pockets of resistance are.
- Don't pass on unsubstantiated gossip that can only hurt another person. This kind of rumor-passing will make you seem untrustworthy.
- If a rumor persists, try to check it out. Your supervisor will be glad to know what people are talking about.
- If you want people to tell you what they know, you'll need to reciprocate by telling some things you know.
- When you want everybody to know something that you can't put in a memo or say in a meeting, such as the real reason someone resigned, tell a few key people in the grapevine.
- Pay attention to the people who are always in the know. Every organization has some employees in whom others readily confide. The way they communicate and use what they know is a good model for using the grapevine.

(Source: Amtrak Express, November/December 1992)

Money Saving Newsletter Tips

The following newsletter money-saving tips can be used with any printed material: fliers, posters and catalogs.

1. Set clear goals. Know who exactly your audience is and what you want your readers to know.

2. Define tasks. Know who is responsible for what. Have clear job descriptions for everyone involved in the production of your newsletter.

3. Set production schedules. Tell everyone, from the president to the printer, when work is due. Make the schedule realistic and put it in writing.

4. Survey expenses. Write down the cost of all services and supplies. Identify the value of staff time, in-

house services, and any possible donations.

5. Shop for services. Write specifications for every job, then get quotes for any job you think will cost more than a modest amount.

6. Consider dividing tasks. Don't assume printers must also take care of typesetting, or that design and illustration must go together.

7. Work from your budget, not suppliers' fees. Stay in control by letting designers and other service people know how much you have to spend.

8. Consider long-term contracts. Build specifications for services and supplies around periods of one year or longer. Take advantage of

savings from long-range planning and quantity buying.

9. Pay bills on time. Don't encourage service people such as typesetters and printers to quote high prices because they anticipate collection problems. Ask for discounts on bills paid promptly.

10. Stay educated. Take short courses or workshops; read books and periodicals; join organizations for communicators in the field; examine course offerings or community colleges and nonprofit organizations; go to trade shows to see the latest in supplies, equipment, and ideas.

(Source: ASAE's Communication News, November 1992)

QUESTIONS

Q. How often should I poll my employee association members to make sure I am meeting their needs?

A. After most events you should conduct a follow-up evaluation to obtain information about what your members liked or disliked about the event. This way when you are planning the next event, you can take their suggestions into consideration. If you are conducting follow-up evaluations on a regular basis you also have an ongoing gauge by which to plan your events.

Once a year is a good opportunity to perform a general survey of your members. Conduct the survey early enough in your planning so as to take into consid-

eration their recommendations. A good time for a yearly poll is before you plan your next year's events and budget. Conduct the poll with questions focusing on events you had that year and end the poll with an area where your members could write their suggestions for future programs. When conducting the survey try to ask specific enough questions about events so as to find out exactly what members liked or disliked. A general question about the Christmas party could illicit a negative response for the majority of your members, when in actuality they just might not have liked the time of day. The more specific you are in the poll, the better you can plan your events to meet your members' needs.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley

NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life

**"Behaviors not rewarded
with attention most probably
will not be repeated."**

*Alvin N. Deibert and Alice J. Harmon,
"New Tools for Changing Behavior"*

An Active Vacation Experience

by Joe Sweeney

Some people think an active vacation is unrelenting physical exertion, perhaps resembling boot camp or training for the Ironman Triathlon. The fact is, if you choose a physically-oriented vacation that is reasonable for your level of fitness, your trip can provide fun, excitement and invigoration, and it will have a favorable impact on your health and fitness at the same time. Be sure to be realistic about your level of fitness prior to planning your trip.

Are your employees tired of sitting in tour buses and observing the world from a distance? There are more opportunities than ever for your employees to be participants, not spectators, on their next vacation. Your employees can cycle, walk or cross country ski from inn to inn in Vermont. Participants can bicycle the San Juan Islands, the redwoods of Northern California or the canyon lands of Utah via mountain bike. Kayak adventures are also available in the Baja peninsula, and overseas you can trek across England, Switzerland or in Nepal.

Fitness resorts are springing up everywhere, offering exercise options from hiking to step classes, weight training to yoga, volleyball to aerobics.

Ecology-minded vacations are popular in the 1990s. Working along with scientists, vacationers can study

Rocky Mountain wild flowers, teach dolphins a language or work on archaeological digs.

An active vacation can be one of the most satisfying and healthiest diversions from the real world that you have ever experienced. Your employees will savor the time spent recharging their batteries mentally while physically exerting themselves.

Investigate the possibilities for healthy adventures by scanning the back pages of cycling, walking and outdoor magazines. Other good sources are spa books and travel agents.

Joe Sweeney speaks professionally on how to achieve healthy change in one's life. He can be contacted at 619-452-3059.

Low-Cost Promotion

Many effective marketing methods are low cost and right in front of you every day. These can easily be used to enhance your employee association and/or your ES&R department.

Track down employees' names that you spot in company newspapers

Continued on page 2

Low-Cost Promotion

Continued from page 1

or magazine articles if you think they would make good prospects for employee programs.

Write letters to the editors of publications you read. This can bring your program wide publicity. If your letter is published you might want to

send copies to your management.

Personalize your generic mailings. Also try inserting your employee's name throughout the mailing, jotting a personal note, and signing your name in a different color ink.

Although these practices don't take much time or money, they can increase participation in your programs and create positive public relations for your department.

(Source: Nation's Business, October 1992)

Can A Company Control Love and Marriage?

Do you have the right to tell your employees not to date coworkers? Can you refuse to hire the husband or wife of someone already in your workplace?

Workers' personal privacy rights are a key human resources issue for the 1990s. The dilemma is: Where do the concerns of the corporation take precedence over freedom of workers to live their lives as they see fit?

For the most part, management can legally regulate nepotism. An adverse impact on this would be excluding a protected class from your workforce. A workplace that is 85

percent male in a small town, in refusing to hire wives, may be excluding women.

From an employee relations viewpoint, companies do not need to define policies on dating and marriage, but can evaluate romances among workers on a case by case basis. When the relationship is between subordinate and boss, management may want to offer to transfer one or the other. Management can also discuss and ask the couple if they can keep their personal lives out of the office and out of everyday business decisions.

A legitimate business reason for

stepping in does exist when there is dating between manager and worker, or between an employee and the employee of a competitor.

The National Association of Working Women, an organization known as 9to5, advises companies not to place a ban on dating between employees. If the romance between coworkers does not create a problem, it is really no one's business. People involved in an office romance, need to ask themselves what will happen if the relationship falls apart.

(Source: Management Policies and Personnel Law, September 15, 1992)

DID YOU KNOW?

- There are seven categories of NESRA membership.

(Read the enclosed brochure "All You Should Know About NESRA" to learn more about your association.)

- In 1990, 53 percent of mothers with a child under a year old were in the labor force—that's up from 31 percent in 1976.

(Source: University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter, December 1992)

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."

Mother Theresa

Ruining a Good Presentation

No matter how good your written documentation is, a bad oral presentation to management can ruin your chances of success. If you want to ruin a successful presentation be arrogant. You will alienate your audience if you appear lofty or preach to them.

- Be uninformed and misread, ignore or never learn what management expects from the presentation; what type of presentation they would be most comfortable with; what kind of pitch would best match the audience.
- Be ignorant and tell offensive, racist, chauvinistic jokes. Avoid learning the titles and job responsibilities of review committee members.
- Be windy and do all the talking. Be expensive and scare them with talking about how much this is going to cost.
- Be superfluous and bring too many people to the presentation. Let one person dominate the discussion. Be phony and try to make the prospect believe that your firm or staff members are something that they are not. Be invisible and forget that they may have sat through three to six other presentations; don't create something unique in your presentation that will make you stand out from all the others.
- Be noncompetitive and don't worry about the other competition. Be disorganized and don't practice your presentation.

Making one of these mistakes won't kill you but if you reverse the polarity of these points on ruining a presentation you increase your chances for success.

(Source: Public Relations Quarterly, Fall 1992)

• Don't duck a complaint. Be sure to make the first move toward resolution. Even the smallest of problems can snowball if it's not taken care of right away.

(Source: Business & Industry Hotline, No. 34)

• Give all your employees business cards. For an investment of about \$25 per employee you can reap the benefits of their contacts. You never know who your employees may know or meet.

(Source: Executive Edge, November 1992)

Safe Crafting

Employees working with ceramics, pottery, photography, jewelry, enameling, stained glass, glass blowing, models, sculpture, or woodworking can be risky because of the hazardous substances used with these hobbies. When these substances are mixed or combined with other substances, handled improperly, or not used with the proper safety equipment, the health risks increase.

Toxic substances can enter the body by ingestion. Putting the handle of a tool in the mouth or touching the lips with fingers can cause ingestion. Avoid allowing eating or drinking in work areas.

Toxins can also be absorbed through the skin. Hobbyists who have contact with chemical solutions or toxic materials should wear non-asbestos safety gloves.

Inhalation is the most common way toxins get into humans. Toxic gases, fumes, vapors, and dust will be in the air and inhaled into the lungs.

Take the following precautions when employees work on hobbies:

- Never allow employees to work on crafts or hobbies in common areas of the workplace.
- Teach about the hazards of the materials and processes that they will use. Tell them to read all labels, and follow manufacturer's instructions.
- Clearly label all materials and keep them in their original containers.
- Make sure the work area is properly ventilated, clean and organized.
- Vapors from solutions can be as flammable or more so than the solutions themselves.
- Safety goggles, gloves, and a safety apron should be required.

(Source: Your Health & Fitness, October/November 1992)

Minimizing Employee Burnout

All companies have one thing in common: They share and try to live with a high-pressure environment that contributes to high levels of stress and job burnout. Burnout does not happen overnight or from a single event, but rather from a series of events over weeks, months or years.

One of the primary causes of burnout is the repetitiveness or rut of the job. All jobs become routine as we get more effective in doing them. Lack of appropriate resources, objectives and directions are also key causes of job dissatisfaction.

Typical signs of burnout include behavior patterns such as: emotional exhaustion, a sense of giving more to the job than one is getting back, nothing left to give, never getting the job done well or on time, poor attendance, excuses, poor attitude, overwhelmed by the task and pushing to get the job done at all, seemingly accomplishing less and less, and generally not caring about the job as much as before.

Minimizing job burnout is a complex task. Some suggestions are: Set limits on how much you'll take and give, allow more time to com-

plete a job whenever possible, promote a feeling that change is good, look for more positive ways for employees to gain recognition, and get in touch with the reason people chose their fields.

Don't assume that a career or job change will fix everything. There may be an underlying problem in the way work is approached. Positive attitudes and incentives will in the long run minimize burnout.

(Source: *Management Strategy*, Summer 1992)

QUESTIONS

Q. What is NESRA's Membership and Peer Network Directory? How do I use it?

A. The *Membership and Peer Network Directory* is updated annually and you should receive your 1993 edition around the end of April. The *Membership and Peer Network Directory* provides a listing of the current Board of Directors, the Headquarter's Staff and the NESRA Committees/Staff. It includes information about NESRA from chapters to bylaws.

NESRA member companies are listed by region and alphabetically by NESRA member's last name.

One of the most useful tools of this publication is NESRA's *Peer Network Directory*, the colored index pages in the center. These pages categorize NESRA members

by their areas of expertise and identify members' company sizes. Here you'll find over 70 topics ranging from alcohol policies to lunchtime seminars to work and family programs. Use this peer network, for example, when you are looking to have a health fair and need some help getting started. Turn to the colored pages of the directory. Look under health fairs and you can call any number of NESRA members with the same size company as yours. This feature saves you time. By giving you contacts to experts in specific ES&R areas, you can call your peers to request samples of documents, or to answer a simple question.

Receiving the *NESRA Membership and Peer Network Directory* is just one of the many benefits of being a NESRA member.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley
NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life

"Pessimism never won any battle."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Games and Entertainment for Your Company Picnic

The season for company picnics is on its way. Your games and outdoor recreation need a focal point that brings the group together. Games are the heart of any picnic. Games can serve as ice-breakers, interest-rousers and will help pull the crowd together.

Games for children should be alternated with games for adults. This will provide a change-of-pace and keep people from wandering away. Instead of breaking the children's group down by ages consider using the measuring stick method. Have the children line up to be measured for size. The children can then be allowed to compete by "size groups" rather than "age groups."

Two important things to remember when planning games for picnics are to allow rest periods between preliminary heats and finals and that the majority of the games should be chosen so that everyone can participate.

Try these picnic games for children up to five years old:

1. Candy Scramble. Scatter a quantity of wrapped candy or lollipops on a tarpaulin or within a designated area. Give each child a two-pound paper bag. At a given time, let the children

start to find the candy. Any candy the children find is theirs to keep. Limit the game to 20 or 30 children per group.

2. Playmates Race. Each child is paired with a playmate. The two

children grasp hands and run 10 yards to a finish line. The first pair of playmates to cross it are the winners of the race.

3. Grab Bag. Place favors or gifts along a parallel line about 30 feet from the starting line. The children race at the signal "Go" and each picks up and keeps his/her choice of a prize. Be sure the children understand there is only one gift for each child.

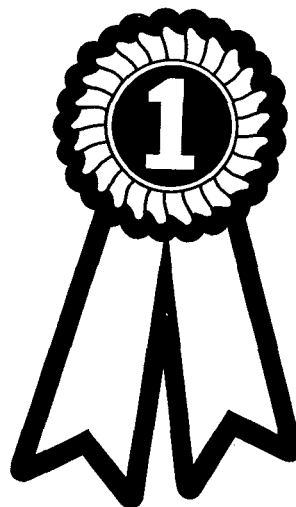
Keep the prizes in the same type category to prevent fighting.

Games for Five-to-Nine-Year Olds:

1. Backward Crawl. Line up the contestants along the starting line facing the finish line (about 50 feet away). Then they turn around and get down on their hands and feet (chest towards the ground). They must race backwards in this position.

2. Treasure Hunt. Hide some toys of universal interest in unlikely places. Then it is finders keepers.

3. Sack Race. An old favorite at every picnic. Each contestant is given a



Games and Entertainment For Your Company Picnic

Continued from page 1

gunny sack. At a given signal s/he jumps into the sack, holds it waist high and hops to the finish line 10 to 30 yards away. Use soft ground for this event.

Picnic Games for Children and Adults:

1. Balloon Bat. Contestants line up behind a designated line. A chair or chalk circle, or some other goal is at a designated spot about 20 feet away. At the signal, all the players at the same time bat their balloons with open palms across the open space, around the goal, and back to the starting point.

2. Blockhead Race. Contestants balance six-inch blocks of wood on their head, race 25 yards to the finish line. The contestant may not touch the block with his/her hands. If the block falls off the contestant's head, s/he is out of the race.

3. Tandem Race. A team running race between two lines 60 feet apart. Contestants pair off, one behind the other, the rear person locking his/her arms around the waist of the other. They must run in lock step and upon reaching the opposite line, change places, and race back.

4. Time Guessing. Have a clock wrapped up so that no one knows at what time the hands are set. The person guessing closest to the correct position of the hands when the package is opened wins the clock.

People like to win prizes because it gives them a sense of achievement and accomplishment. Make sure there are enough prizes even if less per prize is spent. Door prizes are crowd pleasers and anyone at the picnic may win.

Information about the games came from Motorola's Recreation Manual, 2nd edition. This 238-page volume is particularly helpful to those needing assistance in administering employee recreation programs. It covers a wide range of employee services and activities with sections on safety, insurance, financing, recognition, banquets and the planning of on- and off-site employee activities. To purchase this publication, send a check for \$35 for members, \$40 for nonmembers to NESRA Headquarters.

A New Way For A Scenic Hike

Your employees can hike in scenic places without ever leaving their neighborhood. A hiking program incorporates walking, a theme and vivid descriptions of the sights, sounds and smells encountered along a particular trail to help the employees feel as though they are there.

Each week participating employees and their family members, both individually and in teams,

turn in logs charting the miles they've walked. From the mileage, you calculate where the employees would have walked along a scenic area. You write up a newsletter in the form of travelogs that are distributed every couple of weeks. Filled with imagery, these newsletters bring trails to the hikers. The newsletters contain helpful walking tips, healthy recipes and other such information. (Source: *Personnel Journal*, February 1992)

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 24 million employees are eligible to participate in 401(k) savings plans, and about 13 million do.

(Source: *USA Today*, October 30, 1992)

- The skills that companies look for most often when interviewing new employees: public speaking, financial management, people management, interviewing, training, writing.

(Source: *HRMagazine*, November 1992)

New Rules For Business

There are some new rules to get ahead in business. Just knowing your job inside and out and getting along with your colleagues and your boss doesn't always get you the promotion you deserve.

Here are five rules that career strategists say you must revise to succeed in 1993 and beyond:

Old Rule: No news is good news. *New Rule:* Solicit feedback on everything. Don't wait until your annual appraisal to discuss your performance. Job experts say you should request informal, but regular meetings with your boss to review your work.

Old Rule: Avoid office politics. *New Rule:* Become a political animal. Study the political climate of your company and the personalities and styles of its players. Then figure out how to campaign for yourself within that environment.

Old Rule: Accept status quo. *New Rule:* Embrace and anticipate change. You must be open to new ideas.

Old Rule: Wait for a raise. *New Rule:* Ask for one. At a time of budget cutbacks, raises no longer are commonplace. You need to prove you deserve one.

Old Rule: Focus on daily tasks because of heavy workloads. *New Rule:* Indulge in career-enhancing activities. Now, more than ever, you need to network.

(Source: *The Chicago Tribune*, December 27, 1992)

Financial Counseling

Money concerns impact everyone's productivity. A number of people do not make enough money to pay for even the most basic living expenses. Smaller salary increases, passed-on insurance premiums and increased deductibles have seriously impaired employee cash flow.

There is a need for companies to provide all employees with programs to help them deal with personal money issues. There are two levels of financial assistance that EAPs can provide.

The first is for the employee who approaches the counselor with a problem. As with other problems, the counselor will initially assess the extent of the problem and refer the person to an outside resource for help.

The second level of financial assistance is aimed at employees who are on the edge and show early warning signs of being in financial trouble. For this group, EAPs can offer educational materials which provide tips and tools that can prevent or eliminate problems and get them on the right track to manage their money more effectively.

Lunchtime seminars have become a popular way to present financial information. Outside professionals can be brought in to present the seminar.

As with other employee assistance services, it is important to use a variety of methods to make employees aware of the various services available. Company newsletters, poster boards, and computerized mail systems are all avenues that should be used.

(Source: *Employee Assistance*, July 1992)

• **Be selective. Be concise. Don't tell people what you know: tell them what they need to know, what it means to them and why it matters.**

(Source: *Communication Briefings*, August 1992)

• **Did you know NESRA has a variety of member services available to you? See the "NESRA Member Benefits" brochure enclosed in this mailing for a description of those services.**

"A human being's first responsibility is to shake hands with him/herself."

Henry Winkler, actor/director

Reducing Employees' Resistance To Change

Getting employees to accept change within an organization involves understanding both the external and internal pressures that make the change necessary. These 11-steps simplify the change process and the change agent's role.

1. Assess yourself. Your personality, attitude, communication skills, knowledge, and experience as the expert are pivotal contributions to the project and design plan.

2. Assess the system. The sponsoring organization, company, or agency will influence the change process, who participates and the outcome.

3. Assess the client. Determine how to get a clearer picture of your client.

4. Determine the intervention objectives. The most useful way to begin the design planning is to look at the desired outcome or final product.

Decide what you expect your clients to be able to do, know, think or feel by the end of the change effort.

5. Select learning strategies. A combination of involvement, demonstration, team building and communication exercises at the beginning builds cohesiveness and allows the leader to learn more about a group's norms and behaviors.

6. Tap resources. Make a list and think about your needs far ahead of actual meeting dates.

7. Check effectiveness. You and your

participants must access the progress toward a final product. Often well-written objectives will provide a source for evaluation.

8. Create a plan. Make an agenda of objectives to be dealt with at each meeting. Make sure all the people involved have a copy. Publish and forward the results to all members.

9. Take action. Careful planning gives you the confidence to stay on target.

10. Evaluate. Evaluate to calibrate.

11. Celebrate. Celebrate your successes.

(Source: *Personnel Journal*, September 1992)

QUESTIONS

Q. Should I serve alcohol at my social functions?

A. There are numerous cases where an employee who had become intoxicated at a company event was involved in an automobile accident, and the employer was held ultimately responsible, according to the *Legal & Tax Letter*. Consider these safety precautions:

1. Do not serve alcohol. This is the ideal solution but may not be popular. If alcohol is served, also offer non-alcoholic drinks.

2. Do not have the party at the office. A hotel, restaurant or home is preferable because it emphasizes

the fact that the party is purely social.

3. Do not require employees to attend.

4. Never serve someone who is intoxicated.

5. Never serve a minor.

6. Do not allow someone who is obviously intoxicated to drive him/herself home.

7. Do not allow the party to continue indefinitely. Have set hours.

8. Have a bar with a licensed bartender. This prevents people from serving themselves too much and allows drinking to be monitored.

9. Do not conduct business at the party.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association,
2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley

NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life

"Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't."

Erica Jong, author

Planning for a Vacation

Summer vacation time is almost upon us. Maybe you are planning to take your family to a cottage by the water for two weeks or are planning a few days away from home. Whatever time you are planning to be away from the office requires you to effectively plan for your absence.

Try to plan your vacation for a time when major projects aren't due. As soon as you know when and for how long you plan on being away from work, tell your supervisors and your coworkers.

Keep track of the projects and work you do on a daily basis. There are probably a lot of things you do every-day that you take for granted. Keep track of everything so you can make sure it will get done while you are away.

Once you've set a vacation date, start to plan a schedule of projects to be done before and after your vacation. Break the projects into pieces and schedule the work into your calendar. Plan to have certain parts of the projects done at specific times and stick to it.

For any projects that are to be done immediately upon your return make sure you have them well underway before you leave. Also break those projects into pieces and work on getting them done on time.

Try to delegate to coworkers areas of your work that will need to be attended to on a daily basis while you're gone. You can reciprocate for your coworkers when they go on vacation.

Before you leave on vacation, instruct a coworker on where any files, projects, etc. are in case of an emergency. You've been working on the projects that need to be done while you are on vacation and will have them completed before you go. You also will have underway any projects that will need to be due after you get back.

You can now leave for your vacation with a clear conscience. You have all your work done, and a capable coworker can cover for you while you are gone.



Compiling an Office Manual

An operations manual can increase productivity and save time. It consists of two parts: The first part is an employee manual, also called an employee handbook. The second component of the manual has to do with the day-to-day operations of your organization.

You should be able to document virtually everything that is done in your organization, such as how to operate the copier, fax machine and computer.

The employee manual is usually 10 to 12 pages and everyone gets a copy of it. The operations manual is typically in a notebook and has a number of sections. Tabs help to keep the sections organized.

The operations manual can be constructed by management as a team effort. A good manual is never completed, it is always being updated. Legal counsel should look at a manual after it is complete to make sure it complies with the laws of your state.

The purpose of the employee manual is to establish, in writing, all

of the employer's expectations of each employee. The manual will also help the company avoid litigation problems. The second level of the manual is to address what employees expect of the employer.

An employee manual should begin with the table of contents. Start with a cover sheet and a letter from the company president. The letter should cover the president's visions for the present and the future. The letter is also a great place to introduce the culture of the organization.

The next area the manual should cover is a brief history of the organization. A good relationship starts when the employees understand where the company has come from and how it got to where it is today. Also describe the facilities, and if there are other office locations, list addresses and key people at the offices. Include an organizational chart so that new employees will know the responsibilities of other people in the company.

Make sure to state your company's management philosophy.

A copy of your organization's mission statement should be included in the handbook. It addresses the philosophy, focus and purpose of your organization. Include your company's goals for the future. The goals should be reasonable, possible to accomplish and a timetable should be attached.

Typical policies that should be included in the operations manual are: working hours; vacations and time off; organizational holidays; dress codes; code of conduct; employee reviews; salary policy and paydays; productivity and incentive bonuses; promotion policy; sick leave; smoking policy; benefits; grievance procedures; probation and terminations; and equal rights and opportunity policy.

Finally, have each employee read the operations manual and sign an acknowledgement form. The form states that they have read the policy manual and understand and agree to the policies.

(Source: Courier, December 1992)

DID YOU KNOW?

- Sixty-six percent of women comparison shop when shopping for clothes. Eighteen percent impulse buy and 16 percent shop only sales.

(Source: USA Today, November 12, 1992)

- You can't change the way people think. You can only drop a seed that irritates their mind, allowing them to rethink a decision.

(Source: Executive Edge, January 1993)

"Spring is nature's way of saying 'Let's Party!'"

Robin Williams, actor/comedian

Time Management

As a manager you have quite a few interruptions during the course of the day. If you find yourself spending too much time answering or fielding questions try following this advice:

- For a few days, make a list of all your interruptions—all unscheduled visits or calls from employees, vendors, and customers that you either refer to someone else or handle.
- For each interruption, write down the subject matter, and to whom you referred the matter.
- If you yourself handled the matter, write down whether it had to be handled right away.
- Make a list of frequently occurring problems or situations that come to you, and indicate to whom they should be referred. Give the list to an

assistant and let him/her handle these situations.

As to things you must handle yourself, instead of allowing the person doing the interrupting to take up your time at that moment, ask him or her whether the matter can wait, or whether your attention is required immediately for "trouble-shooting." Try to set aside time periods when you will be more accessible and only answer questions then.

You can spend more of your time productively and less time on matters that don't really require your attention, or don't require it immediately.

(Source: CPA, Client Bulletin, January 1993)

- **Exercising for 30 to 60 minutes three to four times a week isn't much time when you consider there are 168 hours in a week.**

(Source: Noro Quotes, January 1993)

- **Make a habit of listening to your people and asking their opinion before you give directions or advice. If you listen first with an open mind, people are more likely to cooperate when something has to be done differently.**

(Source: Practical Supervision, January 1993)

Preventive Care

Employers can play a crucial role in improving access to preventive services among their employees, according to a new report from the National Resource Center on Work-site Health Promotion (NRCWHP).

Preventive services—immunizations, screening for early detection of disease or risk factors, and counseling about personal health behaviors—have received increased attention in recent years. Their popularity is largely attributable to their potential to control health care costs by keeping people healthy. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has targeted access to preventive services as a priority health objective for the year 2000.

"Access to Preventive Services: The Role of Employers," identifies the benefits of corporate involvement in the financing and delivery of preventive services, and suggests that employers can improve access in any or all of the following ways:

- By educating employees about the importance of preventive services.
- By providing selected preventive services at the worksite, through agreements with health care professionals.
- By including or expanding coverage for preventive services in employee health benefits plans.

The report offers examples of successful prevention initiatives, and includes a chart with examples of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force's recommendations for adult preventive care. It is available from the Washington Business Group on Health, 777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. The cost is \$2 per copy prepaid.

How to Build Job Security

Many times in downsizing, it's often the employee with the reputation of being able to do only one thing who's on the top of the layoff list. Workers who've fallen into a career pigeonhole might recognize the symptoms: boredom with work you once found interesting, a limited circle of contacts and a tendency to receive similar assignments over and over.

Another indication is you've adopted an "it's my department against the world" attitude and find yourself less open to outside ideas.

Here are some ways to recast your work role:

- Ask for a lateral transfer to another department. Performing the same function in a different environment

exposes you to new people and new skills.

- Demonstrate a skill not in your current purview.
- Learn the lively art of conversation.
- Don't always have all the answers immediately. Even if you know the answer, it might be better to answer some questions with questions of your own.

If you work for a large company, consider a job switch to a smaller firm where jobs with wide-ranging responsibilities are usually more abundant.

(Source: The Chicago Tribune, December 20, 1992)

Productivity

The following tips can help develop a healthier, more productive lifestyle.

1. Cut back on coffee.
2. Burn more calories.
3. Time your exercise—thin to normal people burn slightly more calories when exercising after eating; heavier people, before meals.
4. Build muscles and lose weight.
5. Lower stress equals fewer colds.
6. Avoid back pain—sit all the way back in a firm chair.
7. Exercising at a gym isn't necessary—mowing a lawn and cleaning the house count for burning calories.

(Source: The Sprint Resource, Spring Quarter 1993)

Rules For Parliamentary Procedures

Turn an unproductive meeting into a useful meeting by becoming familiar with parliamentary procedure. Some groups avoid parliamentary procedure because they think it's too complex.

Anyone who belongs to an organization should understand the basic principles of parliamentary procedure. Used correctly, it can help groups transact business efficiently; protect individual rights; maintain order; preserve a spirit of harmony; and help the organization accomplish its goals.

A good rule to follow is that the size of the group and degree of

formality should increase together.

Basic parliamentary principles include:

1. **Establish a quorum.** The power of any meeting is in the hands of the members present at the meeting. A quorum is the number of people who must be present to take legal action on business matters and is essential to conducting association business meetings. The quorum is usually stipulated in the association's bylaws, and before any business is discussed the chair should establish, for the record, that a quorum exists.
2. **All members have equal rights.** These include the right to make

motions, debate, and vote.

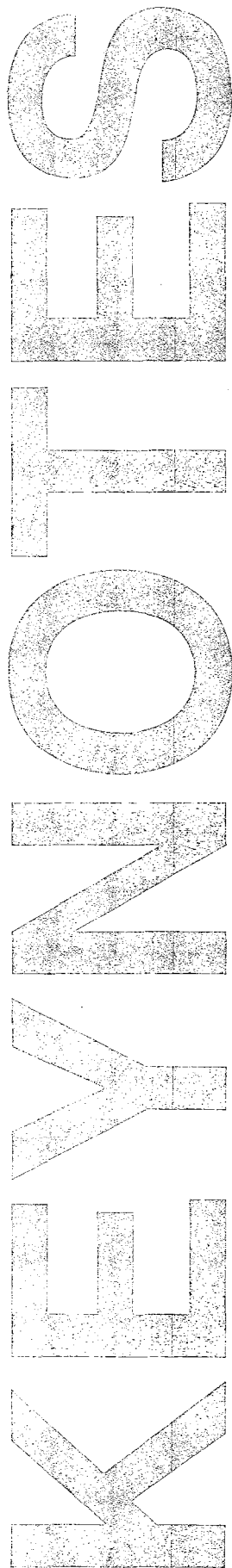
3. **Debate, decorum, and order.** Only one main motion—one subject—may be considered at a time, and only one person may speak at a time. These basic premises help a group focus its attention on a specific issue or action.

For more information on parliamentary procedures, contact NESRA Headquarters for a copy of the article, "Parliamentary Procedures For Employee Association Meetings." The article was printed in an issue of *Employee Services Management*.

(Source: Leadership 1993)

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley
NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life



"One professional clown can entertain more people than several amateur clowns."

Robert Sivek, The Meetinghouse Companies

A Volunteer Program: Renovate a Home

Helping others is a big reason why many people volunteer. Bank of America, San Francisco, CA participates in a volunteer program where its employees can help renovate a low or moderate income home in the community. Bank of America participates with the national organization, "Christmas in April." There are other programs available such as Habitat for Humanity. If you are interested in helping to rehab a home in your area, call your local Chamber of Commerce or community organizations.

The "Christmas in April" program is an annual program in which organizations contribute a sponsorship fee and provide volunteers to work on a home one day during April. The organization will help your company recruit volunteers, work with your volunteers and even train them.

According to Roger Hancock, vice president and manager, TeamAmerica, Bank of America gets involved each year with "Christmas in April" to help with general cleanup, mowing lawns, painting and fixing homes throughout the country. TeamAmerica makes contact to "Christmas in April" in the October prior to the year in which help is given. "We first try to get an idea of what types of work our employees can do and then match their skills with the home improvements that need to be done on the house," said Roger.

To get your organization and volunteers involved in a program like

this, follow these steps:

- 1. Make a plan**—Work with the organization to find out the date, time, what needs to be done on the house, where the house is, etc.
- 2. Form your teams of employee volunteers**—Decide who can do what. Do any of your employees know plumbing, carpentry, concrete work, etc.? A lot of general work such

Continued on page 2

Professional Lunches

At monthly professional lunches 10 people may be seated at a circular table. Once a month, for a modest fee, you interact with nine other people at your table and on a yearly basis more than 100. Consider the possibility of calling on 108 peers in 24 hours.

**9 people x 12 luncheons =
108 contacts**

**12 luncheons x 2 hours =
24 hours**

Follow up immediately by sending a brief personalized note, an article reprint and your business card. This is a great and inexpensive way to network with your peers.

(Source: Contextures, Vol. 1, Issue 1, March/April 1993)

A Volunteer Program: Renovate a Home

Continued from page 1

as mowing lawns, washing windows, trimming bushes, etc. also needs to be done. Inform your volunteers that they don't need a specialized skill to contribute. Have employees sign-up and indicate what they can do to help.

3. Communicate your need—You should tell your volunteers where to meet, what to bring, etc.

Communicate with your volunteers through your company newsletter, flyers, electronic mail, word-of-mouth, and team meetings. Have employees list their addresses on the sign-up sheet. Send out a confirmation letter about one and a half weeks before the event telling employees the who, what, where, when and why. Also inform the volunteers about restrooms, what to wear and directions to the house, including a map.

4. Event Day—One person should be a program coordinator for the 20-25 people it takes to renovate the home. The program coordinator can check the volunteers in and lead the team

into who does what. Consider giving a company logoed T-shirt to each of the volunteers who attends.

5. Evaluation process—Evaluate the program by hard figures and subjective results. How many people did you have at the event, how long did it take and how much did they get done? Were there any supplies you were missing which prevented work being done on the house? The team leader fills out an evaluation at the home site listing what went well and what didn't. Ask yourself whether this is a program you want to be involved with next year and what you could do better. Remember to send thank you notes to every one of your volunteers not only to thank them but also to inform them of the work that was accomplished because of their help.

"We like working with 'Christmas in April' because they take care of getting the supplies and helping us with the volunteers but there are a lot of other worthwhile organizations out there that also renovate homes. It is a

great project for our volunteers because at the end of the day they can see exactly what they have accomplished. We take pictures before we start on the house and also after it is finished. It is a great sense of accomplishment for our volunteers to see the results of their hard work," concluded Roger.

Photo Contest

Plan a vacation photo contest to take place in September. Announce the rules and prizes in your employee newsletter, paycheck flyers, and electronic mail. Make the announcement soon so your employees can get ready to bring their cameras to all their summer outings.

Possible event categories could be: color, black & white, and fun photos. Prizes could include ribbons, film, discounts on future photo processings, and cameras.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Many companies are making it a policy not to discuss pay during performance reviews. People are not as open to feedback if the focus of the review turns to "what they are worth."

(Source: Executive Edge, February 1993)

- Basic skills deficiencies become more acute as changes in the workplace require greater use of the skills needed for new technologies: team and quality skills, interpersonal skills, communication, reasoning, and conceptual thinking.

(Source: Progress Report 1992-1994, Work in America Institute, Inc.)

"No person was ever honored for what s/he received.
Honor has been the reward for what s/he gave."

Calvin Coolidge, 30th president of the United States

Add Public Relations to Your Programs' Campaigns

Interested in publicizing your upcoming program? The first step in a publicity program is to determine which media to target. Don't limit yourself to just the obvious choices. Many publications may reach only a segment of your audience—but they may represent your best chance for attracting that segment.

In order to segment your list, and target your material precisely, you'll need the names of the editors who cover specific areas. Finding the right name, or names, is simple but time consuming. It requires a phone call to the editor or managing editor of each publi-

cation to ask who covers specific subjects or products.

Try to develop a personal relationship with editors. As you build rapport, things will get easier. All things being equal, a personal relationship with an editor can improve your chances of getting coverage. Asking the editor what s/he wants, and when, is vital.

Public relations is not an expense item, something to be cut back in hard times. Properly handled, it can be a profit center.

(Source: Expo, March/April 1992)

- **Keep a tickler file in the file drawer of your desk. It contains a hanging file for each month of the year and individual folders labeled 1 to 31 behind the current month. Use this system to keep papers and call slips you need for a particular day.**

(Source: The Chicago Tribune, March 7, 1993)

- **Snapshots of mishaps can help emergency room doctors gauge the severity of injuries.**

(Source: The Wall Street Journal, September 10, 1992)

Association Members

You need to continually cultivate new members for your employee association. Below are three points to ensure a continuing supply of potential members.

1. Potential Member Identification.

This is a continuous element in the overall member development effort. The key is to move qualified information into a marketing database and to do it so that it is clearly identified and understood.

The information for the database can come from a variety of sources: direct inquiries, referrals, responses to ads, and attendance at programs.

2. Database Cultivation. This is an ongoing task in which you carefully note every contact, the steps taken and the result. A history is created that permits the individual evaluation of a potential member.

3. Continual Cultivation

Monitoring. Each step or phase is difficult because it demands the association's commitment and constant attention, a regular review of the information is essential for translating potential members into active members.

The regular monitoring process is designed to make certain the correct steps are taken. These will include moving a potential member from one category to another at the right time.

There is a psychological purpose in calling them potential members rather than prospects. Because a potential member does not join today, doesn't mean that s/he won't in the future.

(Source: Association Trends, January 29, 1993)

The Family and Medical Leave Act Takes Effect

The Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law by President Clinton on February 5, 1993. The law will go into effect August 5, 1993. In the case of a collective bargaining agreement, the act does not apply until the expiration of any existing agreement or one year after enactment, whichever is earlier. The act directs the U.S. Department of Labor to issue regulations within 120 days of enactment.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 covers all employees who work for employers with 50 or more employees within 75 miles of a given

work place. The act covers all private employees, state employees and Federal employees. There are separate provisions for primary and secondary education employees.

An employee must have worked at least 12 months for the employer and 1,250 hours in the past year to be entitled to the leave benefit. All eligible employees are entitled to a total of 12 weeks of leave during any 12 month period for one or more of the following: 1. birth of a child, 2. placement of child for adoption or foster care. 3. caring for a spouse, child, or parent with a

serious health condition, or 4. the serious health condition of the employee.

An employee who takes leave under the law must be able to return to the same job or a job with equivalent status and pay. In addition, the employer must continue the employee's health benefits during the leave period at the same level and conditions as if the employee had continued to work. For complete information contact your local Labor Department.

(Source: HRNews, March 1993)

QUESTIONS

Q. What do I need to consider when scheduling entertainment for my events?

A. According to Tammy Brooks, employee relations coordinator, Siecor Corp, Hickory, NC, these are the criteria you should follow when booking your entertainment:

1. Cost—What is your budget?
2. General Population—Your choice of entertainment will be determined by who will be in attendance.
3. Event—What type of event are you having—a holiday party or a picnic?
4. Agent—Most bands are booked through entertainment agents. You can obtain the names of agents from the establishment where you will be holding the event, word-of-mouth, or your peers. Make sure the agent is reputable and check the agent's references. Tell the agent the price you can pay, the event's location,

and type of event so s/he can suggest several entertainment choices that meet your needs.

4. References—When you contact an agent for your booking purposes you will get a photograph, listing of songs and possibly tapes of the performance. Ask for references on the entertainment and then ask them: Did the dance floor stay full most of the night?, Was the entertainment dressed appropriately?, Did they play a variety?, Did they play for the time scheduled?, Did they invite audience participation?, Would you use them again?

After you have decided on the entertainment, contact its agent and sign the contract. The agent will let you know price, retainer, etc. Then look forward to having a great time at your event as you watch the attendees enjoy your entertainment choice.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley

NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life

KEYNOTES

A newsletter of ideas for the Employee Services and Recreation Professional

"Success didn't just happen (in the company), it happened because of people."

*Scott Mies, Fel-Pro Inc, speaking at NESRA's
52nd Annual Conference and Exhibit*

Planning a Travel Program

Saving your employees money on their travels will have long-lasting benefits. One of the easiest travel programs to arrange is a cruise. If you work with a reputable travel agent much of the paperwork is done by the agent and the cruise line. When choosing a travel agency, make sure they are financially sound, as they will be holding your deposit monies.

Valerie Webb, Federal Express Employee Association Coordinator, Memphis, TN has planned many cruise trips for her employees and likes the easy planning. "I need to ensure that I have the employees' names, money, and their departure airport—the cruise line takes care of everything else. Also, a group can receive some great discounts from the cruise lines."

The cruise line is responsible for getting your employees from their departure airport to

the cruise ship. For the first trip, try to have a travel agency representative help you at the destination airport. "Sometimes it gets hectic. It's nice to have someone help you get the employees to their luggage, on the bus, and then on the ship," said Webb.

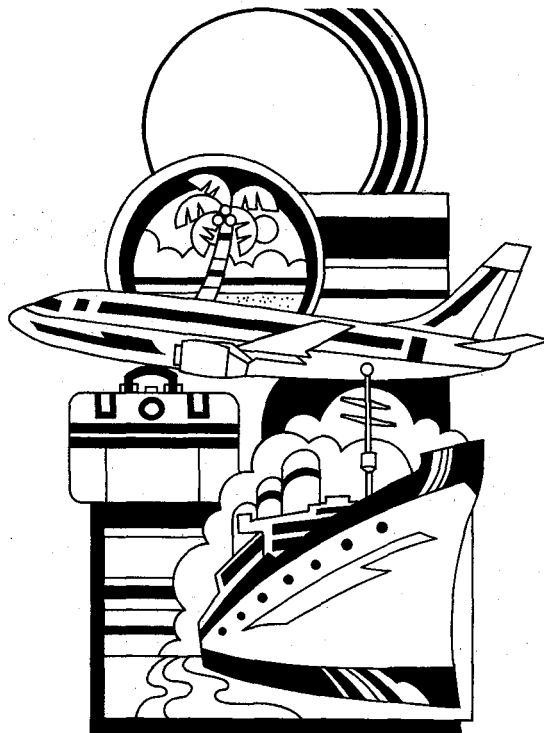
When planning your cruise travel program, contact your travel agency six months in advance of the time you'd like to cruise. Have the agency find out from the cruise lines the dates with the best prices.

After you've decided on a destination and cruise line you need to inform your employees of the trip.

The cruise line can provide you with brochures about the ship and the ports of call. Don't forget to advertise the trip in your employee newsletter, electronic mail and bulletin boards.

The travel agency will need to reserve a block of rooms for your group with a deposit. This deposit will

Continued on page 2



Planning a Travel Program

Continued from page 1

be credited to the room. Reserve more rooms than you may need, because it may be difficult later to acquire additional rooms. You can return the bookings on any unused rooms at a set time before departure.

When the cruise line gives you a price it will be based on a minimum cabin category and a number of inside and outside cabins.

Start accepting the employees' deposits and booking forms six months in advance of the cruise's departure. Deposits will be turned over to the travel agency.

After Valerie Webb receives the booking forms and deposits, she enters the information into her computer. "I then send the employee a welcome aboard letter which lets them know when the final payment is due (usually 60 to 90 days before sailing) and travel tips. I get these tips from the cruise line. It tells the employees about wardrobe, the ports of call, and the proof of citizenship needed," Webb commented.

After you have all the final

payments in, you turn the money over to the travel agent. Allow extra time between when the travel agent needs the final payment and when you tell the employees. "I'll take bookings, if I have room available, up to the final payment date. But, these trips sell out fast, so everyone knows to book early. I offer a payment plan for the employees if they can't come up with a lump sum. But the day the final payment is due, all money must be turned in to me. The cruise line will drop any rooms not paid-in-full," explained Webb.

Additional bonuses given by the cruise lines make this travel program even more beneficial. Most cruise lines will give you a free room for a certain number of rooms booked. Webb takes the monetary value of these rooms and offers free credits to the employees on the ship for bar or photograph credits or T-shirts from the cruise. "You could do a drawing to give away one of the free rooms. I like to give the credits because I feel the whole group worked towards the

free passages so everyone should benefit," said Webb. "The cruise lines will also give a complimentary bon voyage cocktail party to groups."

The cruise lines usually offer several shore excursions per port of call. Webb, however, plans to contact the tourism boards for the ports of call directly and arrange a tour for her group to further realize savings.

"The best part of a cruise for the employees besides the great price is being with people they know they'll feel comfortable with. Even though many of the employees don't know each other before they get onboard, they are part of the group and have a sense of belonging," concluded Webb.

**"To love what you do
and feel that it matters—
how could anything
be more fun?"**

Katharine Graham

DID YOU KNOW?

- Socially responsible businesses will thrive in the future, as consumers seek out companies that operate with integrity.

(Source: Outlook '93, Recent forecasts from The Futurist Magazine for 1993 and Beyond)

- It's estimated that only 1-3 percent of the annual health-care bill in this country goes for preventive services, such as immunizations, screening for disease, and public education to improve personal health habits.

(Source: University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter, February 1993)

Tactics to Keep Exercising

Controlling your consumption of food and drink is difficult if your job involves a lot of entertaining. Sticking to an exercise program will help but it is difficult to do if you are busy. Try these tactics for sticking to your fitness routine:

Set a short-term goal. Set a two-week specific plan as part of your long-range goal. Your sense of accomplishment in achieving this goal should spur you on to achieve the next short-term goal.

Recruit a workout partner. Not only do you have someone else to answer to if you feel like avoiding your workout, but you will also have someone to provide encouragement and perhaps even friendly competition.

Put some money at stake. A study found a bet was enough to help 97 percent of participants stick to their six-month exercise program.

Count backward. While doing reps, count backwards.

You'll think of how few you have left, rather than how many you've done.

Have periodic fitness tests. Go to your health club or local Y for regular measurement of your strength, body composition, and cardiovascular fitness. This will give you proof of your progress.

Keep a fitness log. A training log is important. If charting on paper is too boring, there are low-cost computer programs.

Plan your schedule first. Figure out your available time first, then realistically set up an exercise program to fit those time constraints.

Don't overdo it.
Entertain yourself. Combine another enjoyable activity with your exercise program, like listening to music or a book on tape while you walk, or catching up on the news while you ride your stationary bike.

(Source: *Successful Meetings*, May 1993)

• Visits to national parks are sky-high: 274.7 million visitors in 1992.

(Source: *USA Today*, April 23, 1993)

• If you're involved in a meeting where you're trying to stimulate peoples' creativity, rearrange the chairs while people are on break. This disturbs peoples' sense of position and forces them to realign group dynamics.

(Source: *Executive Edge*, Vol. 24, No. 3, March 1993)

Media Dos and Dont's

It is important to effectively use the media to communicate your company's programs and happenings. Here are some dos for dealing with the media:

- Get to know the media.
- Personalize stories.
- Watch for and save interesting articles about your subject area.
- Keep promises.
- Be tenacious, yet gracious.
- Ask in advance about the interview's focus.
- Anticipate and rehearse potential questions and develop responses.
- Always be available.
- Know the publication's audience and what they need to know.
- Make sure all figures and data you provide are accurate. Admit when you don't know the answer, and offer to get it.
- Be genuinely interested and enthusiastic about the subject you are discussing.
- Be friendly, candid, cooperative.
- Bring notes, backup information, charts, etc. to the interview.
- Let the reporter ask the questions.
- Send a thank-you letter.

Here are some don'ts:

- Go "off the record" and expect the information not to be used.
- Think that good media relations can be bought.
- Ask to see the story before it goes to press.
- Make up an answer. If you can't comment, say so and explain why.
- Talk bad about competition.
- Ask for favors.
- Forget the deadline.

(Source: *CSAE Forum*, May 1993)

Working Side-by-Side with the Disabled

How you treat people influences how they feel about you and the organization you represent, so you'll want to be prepared to work with disabled people. Beyond common sense, here are some tips to use when meeting with disabled people.

- Don't ask personal questions you wouldn't ask someone without a disability.
- Call a person by his/her first name only when you're equally informal with everyone else.
- Don't hang or lean on wheelchairs.
- Consider distance, weather conditions, and physical obstacles, such as stairs and steep hills, when giving directions.
- Offer to assist someone who is visually impaired but allow the person to take your arm so you can guide, rather than propel, the person.

- Use specifics, such as "left 100 feet" or "right two yards" when directing a person with a visual disability.
- Shake hands when introduced to a person with a disability, including those with limited hand use or an artificial limb.
- Identify yourself and introduce anyone else present when greeting a person with a severe vision disability.
- Speak directly to the person who has a disability. Don't assume a companion is a conversational go-between.
- Act naturally. Don't be embarrassed if you use words that relate to their disability.
- Tap a person with a hearing disability on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his/her attention. Then look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to determine if s/he can read lips.

Those who lip read rely on facial expressions and other body language to help them understand. Face the light source and keep your hands and other objects from blocking your mouth.

- Place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat when offering a seat to someone with a vision disability.
- Ask short questions that require short answers when talking to someone with speech difficulties.
- Sit down or kneel so you're both at the same eye level when talking for more than a few minutes with someone who uses a wheelchair.
- When you employ or do business with people with disabilities, beware of putting them on a pedestal.

(Source: ASAE newsletter, May 1992)

QUESTIONS

Q. How can I get story ideas for my employee newsletter?

A. Coming up with new ideas for your newsletter is a constant struggle. Always keep your eyes and ears open for newsworthy items that will interest your readers.

Try calling up a retiree for his/her perspective on your organization's future. Ask members and users of your services to discuss your program's strengths and weaknesses. See if they can tell how your programs have helped them—make the story a case study.

A government official or expert working in your industry could

describe their roles and how they affect the work of your organization.

Call a competitor or critic who could give you an outside point of view that will stimulate your readers to learn about and get involved in issues facing your industry.

Read your industry's newspapers, magazines and newsletters to find issues that are relevant to your workers.

Listen to the radio and read the daily papers to find story ideas that are offbeat but of interest to your readers.

Most important, always keep your mind open to new story ideas.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley
NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life

**"If people can't learn to have fun,
they can't learn to perform."**

*Dr. Jack Groppel, speaking at NESRA's 52nd
Annual Conference and Exhibit*

Vending: A Source of Income

Whether you lease or purchase a vending machine, you will receive a profit for the amount over the cost at which you sell the product. Sometimes these profits can be sizable, as in the case of Lockheed Employee Recreation Association, Ft. Worth, TX. According to J.D. Smith, manager, 50 percent of the association's revenue comes from its vending machines.

The benefits of having an on-site vending machine extends beyond the income. You'll be offering your employees a convenience. "Our employees are happy that we have vending machines located throughout our company. Whenever they get hungry or thirsty they can get what they want from the vending machine. It saves them the time and trouble to go to a local store for a snack," said May Konno, past-president of ABC Employee Services and Recreation Association, Capital Cities/ABC, Los Angeles, CA.

Most vending companies will also let you have control over the type of product you put in the machine. This gives you the advantage of adding healthier snacks and drinks to your employees' diets.

If you choose to have a vending machine on-site, count on having added waste. Supply plenty of trash cans placed nearby to collect the garbage.

Vending machines have come a long way since the days of just soft

drinks. There are machines for sandwiches, burritos, ice cream, yogurt, and even for dispensing tickets and fishing bait. These machines relieve you of staffing a concession stand with people and product.

Vending machines take little staff time if you're not supplying the product. Contact several suppliers and sign a contract with the best one for your needs. Now all you have to do is phone or fax in a weekly order, call the company for repairs and watch as your employees enjoy eating or drinking on break.

Continued on page 2

Fitness Program

We all know the benefits of healthy employees: less illness, reduced turnover, better attitude toward work, lower absenteeism, and better relationships at work. The time for fitness in the workplace has come.

You don't need an on-site fitness center to encourage exercise. A boardroom or cafeteria can be used for lunchtime or end-of-the-day stretch, aerobic or yoga classes. Try clearing an unused room, a storage area, and set-up compact weight and

Continued on page 3

Vending: A Source of Income

Continued from page 1

Some tips when looking into vending machines:

- If you lease the machines you'll have the option to fill the machine with product and empty the money yourself or have the vending company handle it. Take into account the amount of machines you'll have, your staff, time and budget constraints.
- If you are loading product and unloading money from the machines, have an accounting system in place to purchase product and record and deposit the money.
- Mark up the product over the cost of purchase but not enough that you exceed the local convenience store prices.
- If you are buying the product yourself, shop around at local stores for the best prices. Many times if you buy in large quantities you will

receive an even bigger break on price. If you have the room, store the extra products.

- Listen to your employees. Survey your employees to find out what type of products they would like in the machines. Many people are eating healthier and those types of foods can be added to the machines.
- Allocate space for the machines. If you have a candy machine that is going to sit in the sun during the summer, count on having melted chocolate bars. Position the machines to prevent product spoilage.
- When looking at vending contractors check into response times and maintenance service times. "If a machine is always broke or it takes a few days to fix, your employees will go elsewhere," said Stan Motley, general manager, Cummins Employees' Recreation Association,

Inc., Columbus, IN.

- Have an attorney or your company's legal department look over any contract you are negotiating with a vending machine company. Watch so your costs do not rise substantially every year.
- The vending machines will break down. Be sure to have a system in place for those employees who have "lost" money in the machine. You can have a petty cash system set-up or take their names until the machine is opened for returning their money.

Vending machines are a great source of revenue. Not only do you make your employees happy by providing food for them to eat but you can also subsidize your programs with the profits. Your employees will benefit twofold.

"I'd rather be a failure at something I enjoy than be a success at something I hate."

George Burns

DID YOU KNOW?

- Employment experts say bosses who reward workers benefit not only from motivated staffs, but also from the support of upper management.

(Source: The Chicago Tribune, April 11, 1993)

- Give your phone number when leaving a message on an answering machine—even if the person has your number. Many people call in to their machines to hear messages—and don't have phone numbers handy.

(Source: Communication Briefings, May 1993)

Thoughts on Thanks

Appreciation is seldom acknowledged and when it is, the gesture is usually done poorly. Here are important principles to remember when expressing appreciation and rewarding good behavior:

1. **Describe the desired behavior in specific terms.** Expressing appreciation with sweeping generalizations fails to communicate what the person did right and often appears insincere.
2. **Explain why the behavior was helpful.** It helps to reinforce an employee's exemplary behavior.
3. **Express thanks.** Most recognition awards are either performance based, to recognize outstanding achievement, or tenure-based, to recognize employees for their length of service. This expression can range from a simple "thank you" to an elaborate awards ceremony.

The significance of the event should correspond with the amount of gratitude being expressed. When using cash awards, some form of ongoing remembrance of the award should also be given.

Performance-based programs have been credited for achieving short-term improvements, such as greater productivity, reduced accidents, better attendance and enhanced customer service. Tenure-based programs have been credited with long-term benefits, such as company commitment, innovation, and continued membership in the organization. Tenure-based programs are usually tied to an employee's anniversary date of hire.

Be sure to communicate to employees the concepts about your recognition program, objectives and reasons for sponsoring it, the mechanics of the program, including how the program operates, when employees will be recognized, and whether they will participate in selecting the award.

Express the symbolism of the award and the way the program reinforces the company's culture and values.

(Source: HRMagazine, April 1992)

Fitness Program

Continued from page 1

circuit machines. Installing bike racks can encourage employees to cycle to work. Cost-free suggestions include a stair-walking campaign, lunchtime walking or jogging club.

A strenuous fitness program would require showers and changing rooms. An alternative is to have your firm subsidize employee memberships in a nearby health club.

A misconception about fitness programs is that they take too much time: It takes as little as 20 minutes every day or 30 minutes three times a week for effective aerobic activity.

Provide a range of times for working out before, during and after work. Schedule several aerobic classes over the lunch hours, not just one.

Once you have initiated an employee fitness program you need to promote, support and supply fitness facilities. Promote the benefits of health and fitness to management and employees. Use pamphlets, films, speakers, quizzes, contests, challenges, and newsletters.

Show company support through positive policies, such as flexible hours. Sponsor fitness in and out of the office by encouraging company participation in community events. Monitor employee progress and coordinate a fitness program that can adapt to their varied needs and wants.

Supply employees with the opportunity to exercise and stay fit. Give them facilities or creative exercise alternatives to facility programs. Offer various courses, and provide options to make fitness accessible to all.

(Source: American Fitness, May/June 1992)

• **An extra daily dose of vitamin E may ward off heart disease. Subjects who took a supplement of at least 100 IU a day had significantly fewer heart attacks and arterial problems than those who did not take the vitamin E supplements.**

(Source: U.S. News & World Report, May 31, 1993)

• **Forty-nine percent of executive secretaries eat lunch at their desks. Thirty-three percent eat lunch elsewhere in the building. Only 16 percent eat lunch away from work and 2 percent eat at other locations.**

(Source: USA Today, June 9, 1993)

Provoke Employees' Creativity

A major commitment by senior-level management is needed to foster new ideas from employees. Creativity, the activity that leads to innovation, is one of the first things to go in a downsized environment. People aren't less creative when they're working hard; they have less time to work their creative energies.

To foster creativity:

- **Make the time.** Designate one day a month for the entire company to

engage in some sort of creative activity, such as brainstorming. Managers need to provide the structure to let employees take the time to be creative.

- **Make it fun.** Develop entertaining procedures for engaging people in the creative process. Take off ties, jackets and high heels.
- **Make it everyone's job.** Figure out a way to unlock creative thinking at all levels of your company. Include

employees from all levels of the company in the brainstorming sessions, and mix people from different departments.

- **Make it happen.** Lack of follow-through leads to skepticism and inertia among employees. Set priorities, focus on two new ideas, make those happen and people will begin to believe in the process.

(Source: *Folio*, June 15, 1993)

Appraising Your Leader

Executives warn that resistance by management is a major obstacle to successful upward evaluations. Those companies that have used the upward evaluations correctly feel they can play an important role in improving managerial skills at all levels.

One of the keys to making upward evaluations work is in the introduction of the program. Before

launching a program, everyone at the company, especially managers and employees who will be affected, should have an understanding of the evaluation. Another way businesses can smooth the process is to include managers and others before a program is even formalized. Make sure when conducting the upward evaluations you ask the right questions. For

the most part, it's inappropriate to ask subordinates to assess anything but their superior's managerial skills.

Know what you're going to do with the information. Executives must have a clear idea of how the data will be used. Act on what you receive.

(Source: *Human Resource Executive*, May 1993)

QUESTIONS

Q. Why is a communication program so vital to the success of my programs?

A. According to *The Communications Resource* newsletter, a good communication's program sharpens your image to your customers. A solid communications program can involve printed materials such as flyers, brochures, newsletters, electronic mail, bulletin boards or payroll stuffers. Targeted communications gives

you visibility especially when you can't be there in person and it can reach more people than if you had to personally contact them. An ongoing communications program shows that you are here and ready to serve your customers. The program also has staying power—it stays with your customers long after they leave your program.

The more you communicate your programs to your employees the better chance you have at a successful program.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley

NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life

"Accept the challenges, so that you may feel the exhilaration of victory."

General George S. Patton

Holiday Ideas To Add Spirit

Budgets are tight this year but you want to extend some holiday spirit to your employees. The annual holiday party is planned and is usually a well-attended event. What can you do besides the party? Here are some other holiday ideas to add cheer to your employees and their families from Beverly Weiss, CESRA, manager, compensation and benefits, Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills, MI:

Santa Letter—Hospital employees send the names and addresses of their children and grandchildren to the Human Resources department. The department utilizes hospital volunteers to address letters to the children from Santa Claus wishing each child a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year. Put a form in your company newsletter at the beginning of November. "We won't mail any letters after December 15th because we can't be sure the children will receive them," said Weiss. She uses coloring books for holiday artwork. Each year the letter looks and reads different but the underlying message stays the same —be good! The letter is inputted into a computer and the volunteers handwrite in the child's

name and addresses the envelope. "We have even designed a Santa return stamp which lets the child know it comes from the North Pole," commented Weiss, "We sent out 1,000 letters last year and it really promoted a lot of goodwill to the employees and their families."

Santa at the Cinema—Rent out a movie theater for a few hours in the morning. Show a holiday movie and have Santa Claus give each child a stocking of surprises. Give the children popcorn and pop. Botsford General Hospital charges each child \$2 to help defray the cost of the theater rental. Children must be accompanied by an adult but there is no charge for the adults. "This is a great holiday function because there is no clean-up for us. After the movie is over, we all leave," said Weiss.

"We also try to create an awareness in our children of those people who are less fortunate. We work with the Salvation Army on their holiday program. We'll have the children bring a new unwrapped gift to their holiday party and then we

Continued on page 2



Holiday Ideas to Add Spirit

Continued from page 1

give the gifts to the Salvation Army. It teaches the children the rewards of giving."

Holiday Shopping Program—Botsford General Hospital sponsors a trip to Chicago, IL for a holiday shopping spree. You can try a variation to any major shopping area. Two busloads of people leave the hospital early Thursday morning and return Friday at midnight. The cost for the employees includes the bus trip, Thursday night hotel, use of a suite with food for the afternoon in downtown Chicago, breakfast Friday morning and a pizza party on the way home. There are games and video movies on the bus. Thursday's shopping is spent in an outlying discount mall with the hotel booked close to the mall. On Friday, shoppers are taken into the city for shopping. A suite is rented in a downtown hotel for use by the shoppers. "We have lots of food and will watch their purchases while they continue to shop," explained Weiss.

Weiss also researches the area

before the trip. Coupons, maps, special discounts and shopping bags are given to the shoppers. She plans the shopping spree for the first Thursday/Friday in December. She urges you to publish information about the shopping spree in your newsletter, electronic mail, or bulletin boards as soon as possible. "We only take two busloads, which is 100 people. The trip sells out fast and we allow payroll deduction to pay for the cost of the trip. We charge \$85 a person," said Weiss.

Adopt-A-Family—Working with the local Salvation Army, you can obtain a description of local families that would appreciate help for the holidays. Each family will be listed by age, sex and sizes. Children will also have a holiday wish list. You can offer employees or departments the opportunity to adopt a family. Gifts and the ingredients for a holiday meal are bought for each family. Gifts, gift certificates and non-perishable food items are placed in boxes with the family identification number on

them. Have employees deliver the boxes to your loading dock on the morning the Salvation Army specifies and then deliver the boxes to the Salvation Army. Contact the Salvation Army before Thanksgiving for a list and description of families.

Mitten, Hat and Scarf tree—Place a holiday tree in your company's lobby or cafeteria. Have employees bring new mittens, hats and scarves to hang on the tree during a week in December. Then take the donated items to the Salvation Army for distribution to the needy. Publicize the collection several weeks before you plan to have the tree on display. "Each of these items is low-cost, but when you put them all together, they are put to good use," concluded Weiss.

Now that you have several holiday ideas, get to work sharing the spirit of the season with your employees.

For more information on any of these programs, contact Beverly Weiss, 313/471-8654.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Review your most common activities and largest expenses. Challenge your staff to suggest ideas to cut costs in those areas.

(Source: Communication Briefings, May 1993)

- Front-line workers enjoy surveys that help them do their job better. This opposes the general notion that people working in these positions don't strive for self-improvement as much as management people do.

(Source: Association Trends, June 25, 1993)

"A man must laugh to live. Deprive him of play and you deprive him of much of his ability to cope with the pressures of contemporary life, and much of his chance for self-renewal."

Senator Fred R. Harris, Oklahoma

Association Communication

It is important to communicate to your membership news about your association's happenings. If the only news your membership reads is minutes from your board meetings, you need to re-evaluate your communications.

Prepare an information vehicle that provides an immediate, accurate and understandable summary of your board's activities and how the decisions impact the membership.

Two weeks before your next board meeting, review board agenda items and background material. Agenda items must be submitted 28 days before the meeting. Organize items according to category, such as member benefits, committee and council activities and other news. Confirm recipients' fax numbers.

One week before the meeting write a first draft. Each story is told in terms of the action's specific benefit to members, in a format that can be used by speakers and in newsletters. Prepare two versions of each item to allow for all possible outcomes. Create stories that outline the benefits of other committee actions.

The day after the meeting adapt appropriate stories to reflect actual board actions. Draft and include stories of any nonagenda action items that offer membership benefits. Proof copy for final review by the chief executive officer. Two days after the meeting print the final copy, using in-house desktop publishing. Fax copies to recipients or use in-house mail.

(Source: Association Management, May 1993)

• Sixty-six percent of people record their summer vacations by using a camera only. Thirteen percent use a camera and camcorder and 6 percent use a camcorder only.

(Source: USA Today, June 11, 1993)

• If your company isn't big enough to have child care as an employee benefit, consider back-up benefits. If you have a place for employees' children in emergencies, you'll reduce absenteeism, improve productivity, and relieve parents' stress.

(Source: Executive Edge, July 1993)

Getting Ahead in Human Resources

As America strives to regain its competitive edge, more and more organizations are looking to human resources for strategic impact. Greater influence necessitates greater responsibility and the ability to deal with it effectively.

Human resources personnel will need to be technically competent and need to move from a service role to an operating role. You have to be seen as a true business partner, rather than as a subordinate function.

You need to know the business in order to be responsive to the real needs of the organization rather than the perceived needs of your customer base.

Find the best business person your organization has and learn everything you can from him or her. Another important element in an HR manager's ability to influence the organization is the ability to think positively. HR managers need to be aggressive, but not hard-nosed. Never forget that HR serves an important role as the conscience of the organization.

Experts agree that trying to expand or change a role is tough. Work constantly to overcome old perceptions of the role of HR and what it does.

(Source: HR Atlanta, June-July 1993)

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is a painful condition of the hand caused by compression of the median nerve in the wrist. The median nerve runs through the carpal tunnel, a bracket-like bone structure in the wrist, and branches to the thumb and first three fingers.

Early symptoms of CTS include numbness and tingling in one or both hands. Without treatment, the symptoms intensify, resulting in burning pain, decreased hand dexterity and, in extreme cases, paralysis.

Patients with mild cases of CTS may alleviate symptoms by resting the affected hand at frequent intervals or varying its movements. Another approach involves splinting the hand in a straight position to prevent or restrict movements that place more pressure on the median nerve, such as flexing the hand up or down.

Cortisone injections directly into the carpal tunnel give some people drastic relief for months. Other patients respond well to medicines such as aspirin, ibuprofen, diuretics or vitamin B-6. For severe cases of CTS, a surgical procedure called carpal tunnel release provides relief.

If your daily responsibilities require repetitive hand movements, the following precautions may help:

- **Maintain a straight wrist position** as much as possible. Avoid bending, extending and twisting your wrist for long periods of time. These movements put pressure on the median nerve.
- **Vary your activity.** Alternate difficult tasks with easy ones. If possible, switch hands.
- **Slow down.** By reducing the speed at which you perform a task, you can give your wrist time to recover.

- **Exercise.** Ask your physician to recommend conditioning exercises to strengthen hand and arm muscles and reduce your dependence on wrist movement.

(Source: *Noro Quotes newsletter*, April 1993)

Keeping Track

A workplace beeper may be on its way to your office that can keep track of employees by the touch of a keyboard. The gadget increases productivity because no matter where you are, you can be reached. The device can be left at your desk and your whereabouts are not logged anywhere.

(Source: *Chicago Tribune*, April 11, 1993)

QUESTIONS

Q. How can I learn to enjoy life more? I always seem to be too busy.

A. If you are too busy to enjoy life, stay in shape or see your friends, you need to slow down. The result is that leisure is squeezed in between activities or squeezed out. People are in overdrive for a number of reasons: for example, many things compete for their time.

Management Strategy magazine offers these slowing down

suggestions:

- Don't try to do everything and don't feel guilty about things you miss.
- If you miss the news, listen to what others say about it.
- Handle errands on weeknights, not weekends.
- Use all reasonably priced services for errands, repairs or shopping.
- Make having a piece of mind a goal, just like a career and relationships.

Keynotes is published monthly by the National Employee Services and Recreation Association, 2211 York Road, Suite 207, Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-2371, Phone: 708-368-1280, FAX: 708-368-1286

Editor/Production: Karen G. Beagley

NESRA...dedicated to enhancing employee quality of life